

**a** Some adjectives and adverbs have irregular comparative forms:

<b>good/well</b>	<b>better</b>	Let me ask him. I know him <b>better</b> than you do.
<b>bad/badly</b>	<b>worse</b>	The garden looks <b>better</b> since you tidied it up. "Is your headache better?" "No, it's <b>worse</b> ."
<b>far</b>	<b>further</b> (or <b>farther</b> )	The situation was much <b>worse</b> than we expected. I'm very tired. I can't walk much <b>further</b> . (or ... much <b>farther</b> .)

**Further** (*but not farther*) can also mean **more** or **additional**:

- Let me know immediately if you hear any **further** news. (= any more news)

Note the comparative words **more** and **less**:

- I smoke **more** than I used to.
- We've got **less** time than I thought.

**b** Older and elder

The comparative of **old** is **older**:

- Tom looks **older** than he really is. (*not elder*)

We use **elder** when we are talking about members of a family. We say (**my**) **elder brother/sister/son/daughter** (**older** is also possible):

- My **elder** (or **older**) **brother** is a pilot.

We use **elder** only before a noun:

- My brother is **older** than me. (*not elder than me*)

For **eldest** see Unit 100c.

**c** Sometimes you can use two comparatives together. For example: **harder and harder**, **more and more**, **more and more difficult**. We use this structure to say that something is changing continuously:

- It's becoming **harder and harder** to find a job.
- Your English is improving. It's getting **better and better**.
- It's becoming **more and more difficult** to find a job.
- These days **more and more** people are learning English.

**d** Note the structure **the + comparative the better**. For example:

- "What time shall we leave?" "**The sooner the better**." (= it will be best if we leave as soon as possible)
- "What size box do you want?" "**The bigger the better**." (= it will be best if the box is as big as possible)

We also use **the ... the ...** (with two comparatives) to say that one thing depends on another thing:

- **The warmer** the weather, **the better** I feel.
- **The earlier** we leave, **the sooner** we will arrive.
- **The more expensive** the hotel, **the better** the service.
- **The more** electricity you use, **the higher** your bill will be.
- **The more** you have, **the more** you want.

## UNIT 98 Exercises

**98.1** Complete these sentences using these words: **better worse further older elder**  
You have to use some of these words more than once. Use **than** where necessary.

Example: Let me ask him. I know him *better than*.... you do.

1. We complained about the food in our hotel. But instead of improving, it got .....
2. Your work isn't very good. I'm sure you can do ..... this.
3. Ann's younger sister is still in school. Her ..... sister is a nurse.
4. Our team played really badly this afternoon. We played ..... we have ever played before.
5. You're standing too near the camera. Can you move a little ..... away?
6. "Is Jim younger than Tom?" "No, he's ....."
7. The damage to our car wasn't so bad. It could have been much .....
8. If you need any ..... information, please contact our head office.

**98.2** Use the structure ... and ... (see section c).

Examples: It's becoming *harder and harder*... to find a job. (hard)  
It's becoming *more and more difficult*... to find a job. (difficult)

1. As I waited for my interview, I became ..... (nervous)
2. That hole in your sweater is getting ..... (big)
3. The suitcase seemed to get ..... as I carried it along the road. (heavy)
4. As the day wore on, the weather got ..... (bad)
5. As the conversation continued, he became ..... (talkative)
6. Traveling is becoming ..... (expensive)
7. Since she has been in the U.S., her English has gotten ..... (good)

**98.3** Write sentences with **the ... the ...**. Choose a half sentence from box A to go with a half sentence from box B.

**A** ~~the earlier we leave~~  
the longer he waited  
the more I got to know him  
the more you practice your English  
the longer the telephone call  
the more goods you sell

**B** the faster you'll learn  
the more you have to pay  
~~the sooner we'll arrive~~  
the more profit you'll make  
the more impatient he became  
the more I liked him

1. The earlier we leave, *the sooner we'll arrive*.....
2. ....
3. ....
4. ....
5. ....
6. ....